

A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF MARCEL PROUST AND
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE IN HENRI DUTILLEUX'S
SONATE POUR PIANO AND *3 PRÉLUDES*: MIRRORS IN MUSIC AND TIME

by

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To my parents, Yu-Lin and Wen-Ching for your whole-hearted devotion and unconditional love

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Introduction

In the past two decades, studies on the musical output of the French composer Henri Dutilleux have gained much popularity not only among scholars in France but also in the United States. His reputation as an internationally-renowned composer can be attested through his commissioned works from Mstislav Rostropovich, the Koussevitzky Foundation, as well as from major orchestras such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and the National Orchestra of France. His Piano Sonata (1947–8) has often been presented in concerts and recordings, and is widely recognized as an important continuation to the genre. The eminent French scholar Pierrette Mari praised the *Sonate* as the composer’s “premier sommet” (initial peak).¹

In pairing Dutilleux’s Sonata with his set of 3 Préludes (1973–88), this project aims to look more closely at the Proustian concept of *temps* (time) and *mémoire* (memory) as well as the composer’s fascination with Baudelairean aesthetics. Proust’s influence on Dutilleux’s temporal development in music originates from his novel *À la recherche du temps perdu* (In Search of Lost Time), while Baudelaire’s influence brings about the evocative and the sensual, as well as the visual and the auditory in his works. In tracing Dutilleux’s stylistic evolution and in developing concepts influenced by Proust and Baudelaire, we will examine Dutilleux’s structural and thematic development between the 1940s and 1970s.

1. Pierrette Mari, *Henri Dutilleux* (Paris: Zurfluh, 1988), 37.

Chapter 1: Biographical Background and Influences

Family Background

Henri Dutilleux was born in Angers in northern France on 22 January 1916.¹ Due to the outbreak of World War I, his family did not return to Douai until 1919, when they found their house and printing workshop destroyed. Born to an artistic family that can be traced back to the time of Fryderyk Chopin and Hector Berlioz, Dutilleux has often spoken of the importance of his ancestors in his musical development.²

One of his great-grandfathers on his father's side, Constant Dutilleux (1807–65), was a painter and a friend of Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) and Camille Corot (1796–1875), while his maternal grandfather, Julien Koszul (1844–1927), was a fellow pupil with Gabriel Fauré at the École Niedermeyer.³

Constant Dutilleux acquired some paintings by Delacroix at a time when the painter was not widely recognized, including the famous portrait of Chopin now in the Louvre⁴—a bequest from Antoine-François Marmontel's son.⁵ In addition, there is written correspondence between Delacroix to Constant Dutilleux, which the family used to possess but of which only copies of the letters survive now. Delacroix spoke very highly of his friend, and mentioned Constant Dutilleux several times in his diary.⁶ Julien Koszul, on the other hand, was Director of the Conservatoire at Roubaix. He studied with Saint-Saëns and remained a lifelong friend with Fauré.⁷

1. Roger Nicholas, "Dutilleux at 75," *The Musical Times* 132, no. 1775 (1991): 701, www.jstor.org/stable/965551.

2. Caroline Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1997), 1.

3. Nicholas, "Dutilleux at 75," 701.

4. Claude Glayman, *Henri Dutilleux: Music—Myself and Memory: Conversations with Claude Glayman*, trans. Roger Nichols (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2003), 4–7.

5. Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, and Roy Howat, *Chopin: pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 131.

6. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 5.

7. Potter, *Henri Dutilleux*, 1.

Early Influences and Training

Dutilleux often felt these influences from music and painting,⁸ which continued to serve as sources of inspirations in his composing process as well as the influence from literature that later played a significant role in his major œuvres. Music was a constant presence for Dutilleux as his parents, Paul Dutilleux and Thérèse Koszul, an amateur violinist and pianist respectively, often organized chamber music concerts in their home. From an early age, he was exposed to violin sonatas by Franck, Fauré and Debussy.⁹

On the advice of his grandfather, Dutilleux enrolled in the Conservatoire at Douai in 1924, studying solfège and piano as well as harmony and counterpoint with Victor Gallois, Director of the Conservatoire; meanwhile, his general education continued until he was sixteen with studies in French, Latin, English, natural science and math.¹⁰ In these early years, Dutilleux began to discover the late style of Fauré and immersed himself in the score of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*,¹¹ a gift from his parents on his twelfth birthday.¹²

Paris

In 1933, Dutilleux was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire; the following year, he studied harmony and counterpoint/fugue with Jean Gallon¹³ as well as composition with Henri Büsser.¹⁴ During the 1930s, he became almost exclusively influenced by Ravel's music, which was at the height of its popularity in France. This musical influence, along with that of Fauré and Debussy

8. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 6.

9. Potter, 2.

10. Ibid., 2–3.

11. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 9.

12. Potter, 3.

13. Jean Gallon (1878–1959) was Professor of Harmony at the Paris Conservatoire (1919–49) and taught such notable musicians as Olivier Messiaen, Pierre Sancan, Paul Tortelier among others.

14. Henri Büsser (1872–1973), French composer, organist and conductor, was winner of the Prix de Rome for music in 1893, chief conductor of the Paris Opéra in 1905, Director of the Opéra-Comique in 1939 and Professor of Composition at the Paris Conservatoire (1931–49). He was in close personal contact with Jules Massenet as his protégé and Claude Debussy as his friend. He was known for leading performances of *Pelléas et Mélisande* and for orchestrating the original four-hand version of the *Petite Suite* in 1907 for chamber orchestra (see program notes from San Francisco Symphony Orchestra's official website).

can be observed in Dutilleux's early short pieces prior to the Piano Sonata. Although "Ravel made a great impression on us... [...] it was somewhat to the detriment of other important sources, such as Berlioz."¹⁵ As Dutilleux searched for his individual voice after the Conservatory years, he would find himself somewhat overshadowed by his French predecessors. In particular, their juxtaposed use of modes and tonality as well as virtuosic writing were some of the most challenging aspects that Dutilleux were trying to break through.¹⁶

The composition curriculum at the Conservatoire focused largely on contrapuntal and fugal writing in Bach's style, in addition to writing for large ensembles and string quartets. On the other hand, exposure to contemporary music by Stravinsky, Bartók and the Second Viennese School was excluded from the curriculum.¹⁷ Outside the Conservatoire system, Dutilleux took great interest in Stravinsky's music. He attended several performances of *Les Noces* between 1932 and 1934 as well as many important concerts in Paris by such conductors as Toscanini, Charles Münch, observing rehearsals on Debussy's *La Mer* and Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand, for example.¹⁸

Prix de Rome

Under the encouragement of his composition teacher, Henri Büsser, Dutilleux entered the prestigious Prix de Rome competition in 1936, following his winning of first prizes¹⁹ in harmony and fugue at the Conservatoire. However, it was not until 1938 that Dutilleux won the Grand Prix de Rome: an opportunity to further advance his musical development at the Villa Medici for four years. Unfortunately, this plan was truncated to four months. He returned to Paris in 1939 due to

15. Roger Nichols, "Progressive Growth. Henri Dutilleux in Conversation with Roger Nichols," *The Musical Times* 135, no. 1812 (Feb.1994): 88, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1002977>.

16. Potter, 28–29, 38–39.

17. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 15.

18. Ibid., 15, 20; Nichols, "Progressive Growth. Henri Dutilleux in Conversation with Roger Nichols," 88.

19. First Prize (Premier Prix) was awarded with distinct honor for obtaining a high level of artistry in performance or composition in French national and regional accredited conservatories.

the rise of Fascism in Rome, only to find France then soon occupied by the Nazis.²⁰ A month after he was sent to Nice for another two-year residency in 1941, Dutilleux decided to return to Paris, rejecting the Vichy government's invitation to stay longer.²¹

Occupation

Upon his return to Paris, Dutilleux began accompanying at the Paris Opéra, arranging music for bars and nightclubs,²² in addition to occasionally substituting for Milhaud to teach his classes at the Paris Conservatoire.²³ From the 1940s to 1953, Dutilleux wrote music for such diverse media as theater, dance, radio and films.

During the years of occupation, deprived of the four-year residency at the Villa Medici, Dutilleux found himself unconfident about his musical imagination. This feeling of uncertainty and cautiousness could be seen in the composer's choice of genres, harmony, rhythmic and stylistic features in his works during this period.²⁴ His experiences during the war also added to his anxiety.

In search of new directions, Dutilleux gave much thought to his Conservatoire training, and gradually modified some of it or rejected most part of it. Dutilleux knew that it was necessary for him to have ambitions and determination as a “modernist through explorations of other compositional models beyond his years of study in Paris.”²⁵

Notwithstanding his modernist impulses, his Conservatoire training laid a solid foundation for Dutilleux, with a large number of exercises on strict counterpoint and fugue—a kind of mechanistic thinking that he enjoyed very much.²⁶ In addition to his previous study of Bach's chorales and fugues at the Conservatoire, during the Occupation, Dutilleux devoted

20. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 16–17; Jeremy Thurlow, *Dutilleux: La musique des songes* (Lillebonne: Millénaire III, 2006), 15.

21. Thurlow, 15.

22. Potter, 5.

23. Dom Angelico Surchamp, « Entretien avec Henri Dutilleux » *Zodiaque* 135, (Jan. 1983) : 5.

24. Thurlow, 16.

25. Ibid., 16–17.

26. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 20.

himself to studying scores and composition treatises, including that of d'Indy's on early music, Renaissance polyphony and sacred music, which influenced Dutilleux deeply.²⁷ Perhaps because of his family's Flemish heritage, Dutilleux always admired Flemish contrapuntalists like Josquin and Ockeghem.²⁸

Liberation

After 1945 music by Jewish composers reappeared in France. It opened up a platform for the unknown or previously banned repertoire by the Second Viennese School, Stravinsky, Bartók and Prokofiev to be introduced in radio concerts such as those conducted by Manuel Rosenthal²⁹ and Roger Désormière.³⁰

Dutilleux remained, however, somewhat apart from the aesthetics of composers in the interwar years, particularly those under the influence of neo-classicism such as *Les Six*, protégés of Erik Satie. For Dutilleux, compositions written by several members of *Les Six* in the early 1920s often carried a sense of frivolity and humor that typified the French *divertissement* style and which found resonance in Satie's music.³¹ In the context of his *Piano Sonata* (1946–8), Dutilleux addressed his concerns about this tendency of the French musical tradition, from which he distanced himself:

I avoided a trend that did not correspond to my nature: a certain spirit in French music that is often mistakenly confined to elegance, charm and wit. [...] it is obvious that the musicians in the group *Les Six* demonstrated ambitions strongly opposed to my own.

27. Ibid., 19.

28. Potter, 4.

29. Manuel Rosenthal (1904–2003) was one of the most influential French conductors of the twentieth century, respected for his recordings of the music by Debussy and Ravel. His ties with many French composers, especially with Ravel, as well as his radio programming of Stravinsky's complete orchestral works earned him unrivalled authority in the interpretation of the modern French repertoire; Roger Nichols, "Manuel Rosenthal," (*The Guardian*, Jun. 2003), www.theguardian.com/news/2003/jun/09/guardianobituaries.france

30. French conductor, Roger Désormière (1868–1963), was an important musical figure in performing contemporary works by Stravinsky, Prokofiev and national composers, such as Debussy, Ravel, Messiaen and Boulez; Noël Goodwin, "Désormière, Roger," (*Grove Music Online*, Jan. 2001).

31. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 20; Potter, 55; Mari, 38.

Despite these aesthetic differences, this did not keep me from having a rapport with certain members of the group.³²

The dogma and authoritarianism resulting from the post-war serial method adopted by the likes of Milton Babbitt, Pierre Boulez and Karl Stockhausen did not strike a sympathetic chord with Dutilleux either.³³ He acknowledged its systematic approach and yet, the abolition of tonal hierarchy did not resonate with him, as Dutilleux never lost sight of harmonic awareness in his works.³⁴

In the midst of so much “new” music suddenly pouring out after the war, Dutilleux was seeking freedom of expression and idiosyncrasy, while breaking away from traditional use of harmony, form and thematic concepts.³⁵ Opportunities to compose for practical use in a multitude of media from 1943 onwards allowed him to remove some academicism in his works. As the war came to an end, however, Dutilleux felt that in his earlier pieces there was a lack of “harmonic conscience,” a term he coined in reference to the more rigid contrapuntal procedure in compositional process. The nearly French *divertissement* character in much of his incidental music and other smaller pieces like *Au gré des ondes* (1946) fell short of his ideals, as he stated later:

Musical activity is close to being a kind of ceremony, something very nearly sacred, including elements of mystery and magic—as with love or religion—we should approach it with a certain gravity.³⁶

This remark reveals the influence of Charles Baudelaire on Dutilleux’s concept of sounds and variety of timbres to echo the poet’s fascination with the mysterious world and supernatural phenomenon. A more detailed discussion on this particular influence of Baudelaire on Dutilleux’s compositions will follow later in this document. Baudelairian influences were present in his 1970

32. Surchamp, 18, 35.

33. Nichols, 87.

34. Ibid., 89; Glayman, trans. Nichols, 29, 37.

35. Thurlow, 18–19.

36. Roger Nichols, “Dutilleux at 75,” 701, www.jstor.org/stable/965551.

cello concerto, *Tout un monde lointain* (A Distant World), and became an integral part of

Dutilleux's aesthetic development:

For Dutilleux, the cello, [...acts] as a link, an intermediary, between Baudelaire's world and the sound world, and as the embodiment of the idea of escape—escape through travel, through eroticism, through drugs, even though mystical rapture, so ambiguous was religious feeling for Baudelaire.³⁷

Transition

In 1942 Dutilleux met Geneviève Joy,³⁸ a superb pianist, who was to become his wife in 1946. It was “her very beautiful touch and her feeling for color, phrasing and punctuation”³⁹ that inspired Dutilleux to compose his *Piano Sonata* for her— “a step forward in the search for large forms.”⁴⁰

Notwithstanding its rather “classical” form and structure, especially when placed side by side with such important piano works appearing immediately following the war as Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus* (1945), John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano (1946–8) and Boulez's *Piano Sonata No. 2* (1947–8), Dutilleux's *Sonata* already points to an emerging musical language of growing individuality and maturity marked by a sense of lyricism, tonal and harmonic ambiguity, as well as progressive thematic growth foreshadowing his two symphonies of the following decade.⁴¹ The *Piano Sonata* was premiered with great success at the *Société Nationale de Musique* in 1948 by Joy, to whom it was dedicated, and, as previously noted, it was praised as Dutilleux's “premier sommet,” or “first summit” by Pierrette Mari, who recognized it as a breakthrough after years of searching, questioning, doubting and hard work.⁴²

37. Potter, 80–81; Daniel Humbert, *Henri Dutilleux: L'œuvre et le style musical* (Paris: Champion, 1985), 114–115.

38. Geneviève Joy (1919–2009) was well-known for her translucent and light touch on the piano and for her extraordinary skills in interpreting new repertoire and reading from orchestral scores at first sight. She became Professor of Piano Accompanying and later in Chamber Music at the Paris Conservatoire.

39. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 23.

40. Thurlow, 38.

41. *Ibid.*, 39; Humbert, 41.

42. Mari, 37–38.

Towards Maturity

Almost immediately following his *Piano Sonata*, Dutilleux began to work on his First Symphony (1949–51). The work could be seen as a continuous stylistic evolution from this period with maturing concepts of memory and time derived from Marcel Proust's novel *À la recherche du temps perdu* ("In Search of Lost Time," 1908–22).⁴³ This notion of linking the Proustian literary model with the passing of time in music,⁴⁴ or *temps musical* through aural experience was first implied in his Piano Sonata and First Symphony and it permeated his later works.⁴⁵

If the Piano Sonata was what established Dutilleux as an emerging composer,⁴⁶ his compositions from the 1960s and onwards, beginning with his Concerto for orchestra, *Métaboles* (1964), firmly established him as a mature artist with a unique voice—one that caught Boulez' attention.⁴⁷ In Greek, *métabole* (μεταβολή) signifies the succession of changes until the fundamental nature of the initial idea becomes unrecognizable in the course of development—a concept of significance shaping Dutilleux's compositional approach to variation techniques, in conjunction with thematic, rhythmic and timbral treatment.⁴⁸ In this sense, the original idea undergoes progressive variations and evokes Proustian concepts of memory with musical realization of *croissance progressive* (progressive growth), a term coined by French musicologist, Francis Bayer (1938–2004).⁴⁹

43. French novelist, Marcel Proust (1871–1922) was best known for his seven-volume pseudo-autobiographical novel, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, in which the author's senses stir up memories of the past, evoke the unconscious and call for involuntary memory—the actual form of remembrance, and of not forgetting.

44. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 53.

45. Humbert, 226.

46. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 32.

47. Ibid., 36.

48. Ibid., 52, 58; Potter, 100.

49. Maxime Joos, *La perception du temps musical chez Henri Dutilleux* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), 153.

Time and Memory

In his article “Variations, métable, métamorphose,” the French music critic, Jean Roy discusses the variation process in reference to Dutilleux:

Music, because it is an art in time, because it lives through its own modifications and can elide unnoticed from one form to another, is by definition the art of metamorphosis.⁵⁰

In Dutilleux’s concept of thematic development, the process entails gradual and subtle changes over time—similar to that of variations. These sound events—at times short and not easily identifiable—will latch on to the listener’s unconscious.⁵¹ With relentless search of such musical events and of *temps perdu* (lost time), they can be re-discovered through the trajectory of *mémoire* and *souvenir*.⁵² In Proust’s precise wording, the former refers to the capacity to remember and the latter being the specific events which happened in the past.⁵³

In *À la recherche*, frequent references to the recurring main theme, the “petite phrase,” of the fictional Vinteuil Violin Sonata has been compared by Proust scholars to the likeness of cyclic themes in Franck’s Piano Quintet (1888) and Violin Sonata (1885). However, unlike Franck’s cyclic form, in which the principal theme is presented in its definitive form from the start, Dutilleux’ *croissance progressive* uses “small cells which are gradually developed [...] it is a central preoccupation of mine from the First Symphony.”⁵⁴ These musical cells are then subject both to unconscious development by the composer at the early stage and to involuntary memory in the mind of the listener.

The First Symphony marked a starting point as Dutilleux continued his exploration of *croissance progressive* in subsequent compositions. Dutilleux’s approach to *croissance progressive* applied not only within a composition but also across his different compositions. He

50. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 58–59.

51. Ibid., 51.

52. Humbert, 226.

53. Michael Wood, “Proust: The Music of Memory,” in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwartz (New York: Fordham University, 2010), 110.

54. Potter, 60.

often revisited some of the materials in the preceding works and integrated them in his following compositions. For example, the opening tritonal sonority in the last movement of his First Symphony reappears in the first movement, *Incantatoire* of *Métaboles*, with alterations in orchestration and rhythms. With *Métaboles*, Dutilleux achieved the manipulation of *temps circulaire* (circular time) by linking the last section of the last movement, V. *Flamboyant* to the very opening of the piece. In addition, between movements, the main figure of each movement evolves little by little until a “new” idea is formed for the following movement (Fig. 1). Within the movement itself, the principal material undergoes various phases of melodic and motivic *métaboles* (Fig. 2) until a substantial one interrupts in the middle of the movement, which prefigures the development of the following movement, II. *Linéaire*.

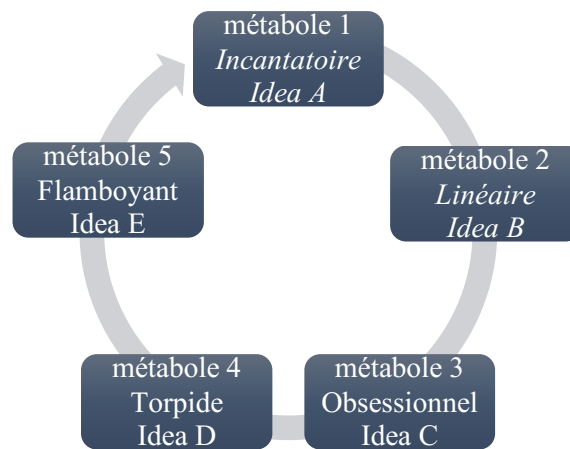


Figure 1 *Temps circulaire* and evolving ideas across movements in *Métaboles*⁵⁵

55. Nicholas Darbon, « Dutilleux aux frontières du chaos : métamorphose et morphogenèse » in *Henri Dutilleux Entre le cristal et la nuée*, ed. Nicholas Darbon. (Paris: Centre de documentation de la musique contemporaine, 2010), 44.

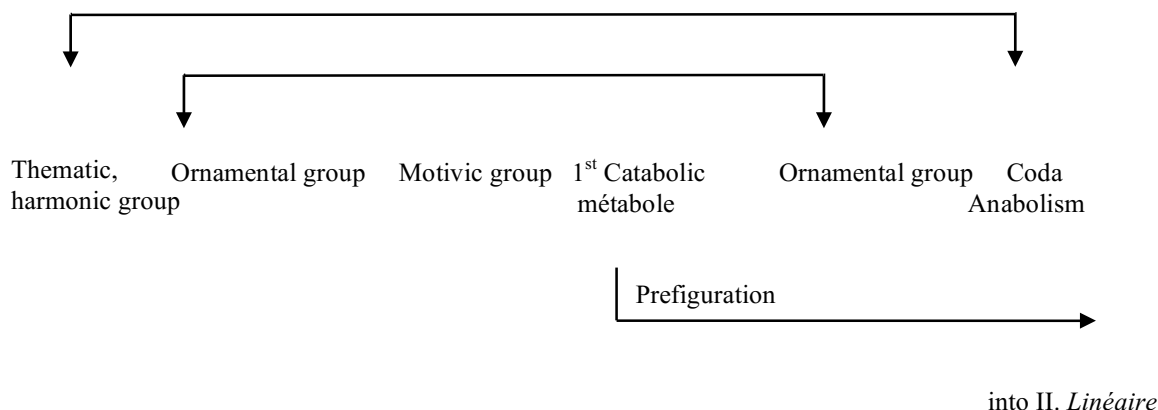


Figure 2 General structure in *Métaboles, I. Incantatoire*⁵⁶

On the smallest scale—even within the same thematic design, Dutilleux never ceased to exploit all the possible mutations from its original form through his use of such devices as repeated intervallic patterns, pedal points, pivot notes/chords, and also what he referred to as *sons obsessionnels* (obsessional sounds) that unveil themselves to the listener's ear over time:⁵⁷ such as the recurring pitch on E in different registers passed on from one instrument to another since the beginning of *Métaboles* (Ex. 1.1) and in Examples 1.2 and 1.3.

I. INCANTATOIRE

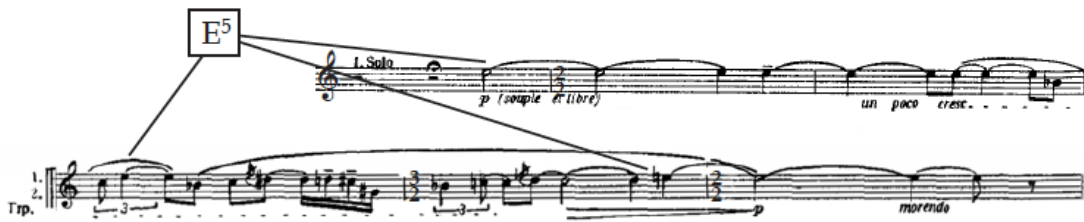
Largamente (♩ = 42)

PETITES FLUTES 1, 2.
 GRANDES FLUTES 1, 2.
 HAUTOIS 1, 2, 3.
 COR ANGLAIS
 PETITE CLARINETTE en Mi♭
 CLARINETTES 1, 2. en Si♭
 CLARINETTE BASSE en Si♭

Example 1.1 *Métaboles, I. Incantatoire*, mm. 1–5

56. Joos, 234 (Appendix 8).

57. Potter, 96; Glayman, trans. Nichols, 53; Mari, 100.



Example 1.2 Métaboles, I. Incantatoire, Rehearsal number 3

Example 1.3 Métaboles, I. Incantatoire, Rehearsal number 5

As will be further examined in the next chapter, these above-mentioned stylistic features and concepts were to become a constant in Dutilleux's mature works and more importantly, their budding presence could be traced back to the *Piano Sonata*.

Chapter 2: Marcel Proust and Charles Baudelaire in Sonate pour piano and 3 Préludes

Throughout Dutilleux's compositional career, he composed only a few pieces for solo piano even though his wife, Geneviève Joy, was a pianist who formed a piano duet with Jacqueline Robin from 1945 to 1990. The Piano Sonata can be considered the most substantial of his piano works, with its three-movement formal structure. It was written during a period when "I was busy trying to find my own voice. [...] I wanted to produce a work of certain breadth, using a dense musical language; I also wanted to find for it a tone of voice, a certain depth, and an individual form. [...] But it's still a transitional work, a link to what follows."¹

Nevertheless, the work exhibits conflicting qualities in Dutilleux's nature:

I feel that the two elements in myself contradict with each other: on the one hand, freedom of expression, curiosity of all with rarity; on the other hand, an innate inclination to instill in my thinking within a framework consisting of form, precision, clarity and strictness.²

Between the 1950s and 1970s, Dutilleux was primarily occupied with his orchestral works, the two Symphonies (1951 and 1959, respectively) and *Métaboles*. All of them explored variety in timbre, sonority as well as "continuous variation techniques" within large forms. It was also during this time when Proust's concept of involuntary memory became more and more of a pre-eminent element in Dutilleux's musical construction. In addition, his growing obsession with Baudelaire's prose poems led to a full immersion into the poet's world of dreams, sensuality and mystery. Dutilleux also found resonance in Baudelaire's preoccupation with "the essential ambiguity of human experience, his aspiration to escape from the imperfect human world, and his conception of duality..."³

1. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 29.

2. Mari, 94.

3. Potter, 79.

Piano Sonata

Dutilleux's dual nature is further attested in such musical parameters as tonality, harmony, melody and form with the pull between following tradition and pursuing invention in his Piano Sonata. A general formal analysis with annotations of thematic development and structurally crucial points of emphasis is shown in Table 1 to facilitate this discussion. In the opening first theme of the first movement (Ex. 2.1), the constant oscillation between A and A-sharp suggests tonal ambiguity between major and minor key on F-sharp. It also creates a sense of modal sonority alternating between Dorian (with a raised $\hat{6}$ in minor key) and Mixolydian mode (with a flat $\hat{7}$ in major key)—an influence indicative of Bartók, who had an affinity for mixing different modes, as found in the opening of his Piano Sonata, Sz.80 (Ex. 2.2).

Allegro con moto ($\text{♩} = 108$)

PIANO

p

Dorian mode

6^\sharp

3^\sharp or 3^\flat

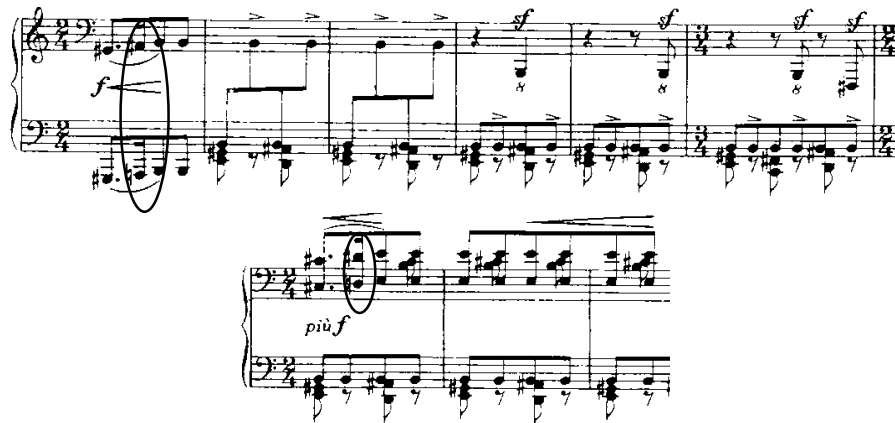
minor second clash resulting from combining Dorian and Mixolydian mode

chromaticism

Example 2.1 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, First movement, mm. 1–6

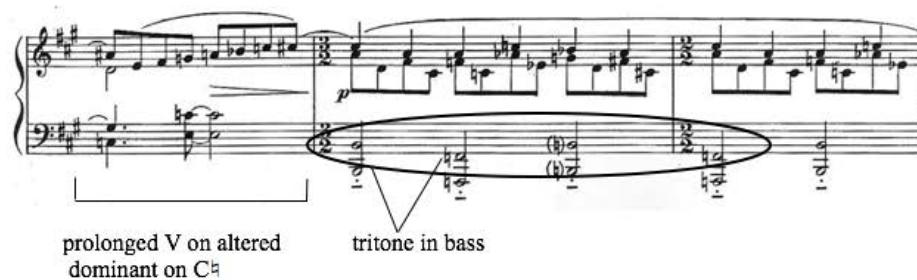
Table 1 General formal structure of Dutilleux's Piano Sonata, First movement

Structure	Measure Number		Theme	Features
Exposition	1–111	1–21 22–32 33–51	Theme 1 Complex New material Repeat of Theme 1 Complex	6-bar theme; pivot note on F-sharp
		52–64	Transition	
		65–99 100–111	Theme 2 Complex Codetta	4-bar theme in octatonic scale transposition 1; pivot note on C-sharp Fragments of Theme 1 and transformed
Development	112–226	112–181	Theme 3 Complex	Pivot notes on C-sharp and G; quartal harmony with tritones Pivot note on B
		182–205	Theme 4 Complex	
		206–211	Transition	
		212–226	Varied Theme 1 Complex	Augmentation
Recapitulation	227–332	227–256 257–286	Theme 1 Complex Expanded Theme 2 Complex	Theme 2 on tonic from mm. 265
		287–302	Transition	
		304–332	Return of Theme 1 Complex	Avoiding tonic with pivot note on G Theme in octatonic scale transposition 2
Coda	333–366		Fragments of Theme 1	



Example 2.2 Bartók, Piano Sonata, First movement, mm. 1–8

In contrast to this instability of tonality, the bass on the tonic and dominant (F-sharp to C-sharp) in the left hand provides a rather stable harmonic support hinting at the tonic; in a larger sense, the ongoing bass line also serves as the harmonic foundation for the first theme in which the principal harmonic progression sways between the tonic and the unexpected “quasi-dominant” on C-natural (Ex. 2.3). However, this momentary peacefulness will soon disappear and be interrupted by the second phrase now accompanied by the interval of a tritone (Ex. 2.3)—one of Dutilleux’s favorite intervals.⁴ From this point on, the section digresses further away from a fixed tonal center with the introduction of an irregular pulsation in combined meters punctuated by abrupt accented notes until the return of the theme.⁵



Example 2.3 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, First movement, mm. 12–14

4. Potter, 63.

5. Thurlow, 39–40.

The austere sonority resulting from the use of the octatonic scale⁶ in the second theme of the movement (Ex. 2.4) shows Stravinsky's influence on Dutilleux and the sonic impact here focuses more on its vertical disposition than a linear one. Preceding the coda of this movement (Ex. 2.5), the octatonic scale is utilized once again—now in disguise of the first theme in augmentation against a moving *ostinato* bass in the left hand.

Example 2.4 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, First movement, mm. 65–68

Example 2.5 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, First movement, mm. 322–327

6. There are three transpositions of the octatonic scale: C–D-flat–E-flat–E-natural–G-flat–G-natural–A–B-flat (transposition 1); D-flat–D-natural–E–F–G–A-flat–B-flat–B-natural–D-flat (transposition 2); D–E-flat–F–G-flat–A-flat–A-natural–B–C–D (transposition 3).

In the development, two new thematic materials are introduced and identified in Table 1 as Theme 3 and Theme 4. The harmonic language of the third theme section beginning in measure 112 (Ex. 2.8) becomes quartal with repeated tritones (E–A-sharp) in chords that obscure tonality.⁷ It is interesting to note how—at the end of the exposition (Ex. 2.6)—Dutilleux leaves the strikingly low sonority of the dominant C-sharp in the bass, which is carried over to the development, a device reused by Dutilleux in his piano prelude *Le jeu des contraires* (The Play of Opposites, 1988 [Ex. 2.7]).⁸ The recurring C-sharp chord with tritone and in measure 112 and the frequent return to G in the melodic line establish Dutilleux’s use of pivot notes and *sons obsessionnels* as early as in his Sonata. In a program note for his Second Symphony, Dutilleux describes a pivot note as “a single, insinuating note [that] acts as a pivot, a central point, and is ‘illuminated’ in an infinite variety of ways.”⁹ In other words, the pitch provides a point of reference in an otherwise unstable harmonic scheme, such as the recurring G in the melody of the development. With repetitions in support of harmonic changes, the pitch also carries structural importance. *Sons obsessionnels*, on the other hand, more exclusively delineate formal structure without fixed pitches, and are based on intervallic relations in various combinations of linear and vertical arrangements.¹⁰ Beginning with measure 112, the tritonal interval of E–A-sharp (B-flat) commences its obsessive sonic saturation as both harmonic support (mm. 112–122) and as melody (mm. 120). By incorporating pivot notes and *sons obsessionnels* in providing a reference point for the listener’s ear, as shown in the third theme section, it reveals Dutilleux’s centrality of note relations in his harmonic language.¹¹ This aural reference to pitches also serves as the basis

7. Potter, 50; Humbert, 32.

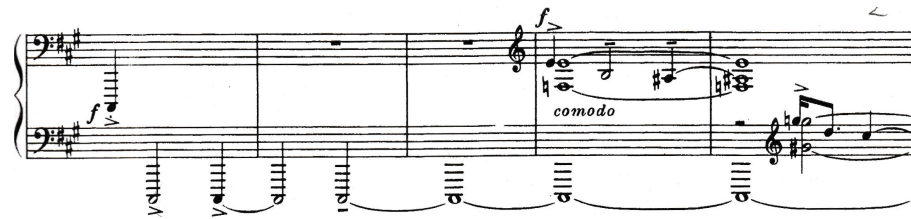
8. Potter, 49.

9. Ibid., 106.

10. Sean Shepherd. “Tradition and Invention in the Music of Henri Dutilleux.” (Cornell University, 2014), 26.

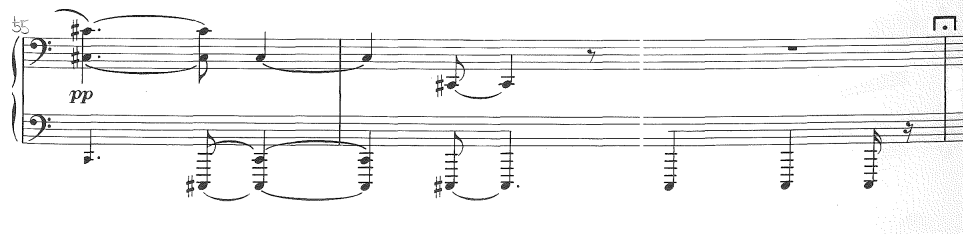
11. Hae Ri Suh, “Henri Dutilleux's Piano Sonata Op. 1: An Examination of Compositional Style and Performance Guide” (University of Cincinnati, 2015), 38.

for Proust's concept of memory triggered by our sensations, which will be discussed in more detail in the following movements of the Sonata.



Example 2.6 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, First movement, mm. 100–104

55



Example 2.7 *Le jeu des contraires* from 3 Préludes, mm. 55–57

Development: Theme 3 Complex

tritone interval treated as *son obsessionnel* quartal harmony

pivot note on G

112 Reprenez le mouv.

sustained pivot note on C⁺

Recurring E–A⁺ tritone as *son obsessionnel*

sempre pp *m.d.* *pp* *sempre* *m.d.*

Example 2.8 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, First movement, mm. 112–122

The second movement opens with a tonally unstable, slowly treading theme with the title *Lied* (Ex. 2.9)—surprising in a French composition. Nonetheless, however, the steady rhythmic pulsation and the use of high register in both hands undeniably recalls Fauré’s Nocturne in E-Flat Minor Op. 33, No. 1.¹²



Example 2.9 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, Second movement, opening

When the theme returns in m. 21, it is presented in inverted form (Ex. 2.10) with two four-bar phrases: the harmonic center of the first phrase (mm. 21–23) pivots around D-flat while the next phrase (mm. 24–27) centers around G—a tritone apart. Although the contrapuntal procedure must have been familiar to Dutilleux considering his Conservatoire training, the use of bitonality with

21 (*un peu en dehors*) inverted theme

pp

sans *ped.*

harmonic center a tritone apart

(*un peu plus soutenu*) *poco cresc.*

un peu de Pédales sur chaque temps

Example 2.10 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, Second movement, mm. 21–25

12. Potter, 50–51.

related themes a tritone apart from each other has similarity to Bartók's exploration of symmetry—a procedure found also in the first movement of Dutilleux's Sonata.

Table 2 General formal structure of Dutilleux's Piano Sonata, Second movement

Structure	Measure Number		Theme	Features
Section A	1–41	1–9 10–20 21–29	First theme Second theme First theme (inversion)	Pivot note on E Pivot notes in bass on A-flat and D and then on F, B
		30–33 34–41	Transition Codetta	
Section B	42–73	42–47	New theme with cascades of perfect fourths and tritones	Pedal point on E ; <i>son obsessionnel</i> with variants of tritones (no specific pivot notes)
		48–63	Theme in imitation and inversion	
		64–73	Transition	whirlwind of sound in connection with <i>temps musical</i>
Section A'	74–97	74–79	Reprise of Second theme	
		80–97	Reprise of First theme	Pivot note on C-sharp and then on E (enharmonically spelled)

This tritonal relationship of shifting harmonic centers can be observed in the oscillating bass of F and B (mm. 28–33) until, in the middle section, cascades of perfect fourths and tritones (Ex. 2.11) swiftly turn into a whirlwind of sound: groups of quintuplets in the top voice are now placed against the rhythmically-irregular accented notes in the chromatic tenor voice (Ex. 2.12). The unique texture and dense sonority is achieved by simultaneously placing two ascending chromatic lines at different rates of movement. The difference in note values (64th notes in the soprano against 32nd notes in the middle voice) in relation to a defined measure creates a sense of time—unmeasured and relentlessly spinning—in search of the lost memory, through snippets of thematic and rhythmic variation.¹³

13. Thurlow, 51.



Example 2.11 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, Second movement, mm. 42–43

ascending chromatic line in the middle voice
ascending chromatic line in the soprano

poco *cresc.*

Example 2.12 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, Second movement, mm. 65–67

According to Thurlow, this passage is one of the first examples that reveals Dutilleux's fascination with *temps musical*. As mentioned earlier in the document (see Chapter 1, pp. 9–10), the concept is closely linked to Proust's involuntary memory with evolving musical cells that move in the space of time, which, will then sneak in the unconscious mind at first and be acknowledged over time. In the words of the visual artist Paul Klee, "the parameter of time

intervenes as soon as a dot lives in movement and becomes a line.” For him, since painting is an art of space and music is an art of time, in considering space as a temporal entity, it eliminates the gap that would otherwise exist on the canvas.¹⁴

This illusion of time free from metric constraints associates itself with qualitative time, one concerning how physical time is organized with the notion of periodicity, relations of temporal duration and asymmetry in the scope of times such as circular time, linear time, static time. In contrast, quantitative time often associates itself with the notion of duration, speed and frequency, which are measurable. However, it is the qualitative aspect of time that attracts Dutilleux and becomes a personal stylistic trait in Dutilleux’s mature works. Hence, *temps musical* is an artistic time of psychological perception, and it is usually a linear-lived time (*temps vécu*) disrupted either by suspension or interruption. It should be conceived as a back-and-forth movement that connects time of the past, the present and the future instead of a continuously forward-moving one.¹⁵

Dutilleux retains Proust’s concept of memory. In so doing, a work’s unity should still be perceptible without being too obvious at first glance; at the same time, the notion of return (in connection with the recall of memory) must carry a distinct vision of perceptibility. Echoing the principle of returning themes in the context of forms in return to the Classical period, French musicologist, Gisèle Brelet states as follows:

...this return is not simply a repetition in the formal sense, but also a sudden burst of clarity in memory—with sentimental resonances—as well as remembrance of the soul in the past and all the poetry associated with it; it is also an expectation fulfilled, the joy of rediscovering this musical character that is already vaguely deformed, and to better understand and appreciate it. [...] ...it is by itself the same theme, but for us, it is not the same; a time span flows between the two successive presentations of the theme, during which we had waited and hoped for, and there is also a metaphysical appeal for its seeming appearance and different sentiment, and its reflection of the irreversible flux of the internal flow in these two thematic statements.¹⁶

14. Maxime Joos, *La perception du temps musical chez Henri Dutilleux* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), 101.

15. Joos, 222–223.

16. Ibid.

It is variation technique that epitomizes Dutilleux's conceptual development of *croissance progressive* (progressive growth), which is closely linked to Proust's involuntary memory (see Chapter 1, p. 10). For Proust, the latter "is the only true form of memory, since voluntary memory, the memory of intelligence and the eyes, yields us only imprecise facsimiles of the past. We don't recall the past until we stumble into a sensation..." By contrast, involuntary memory "is a recovery of reality, [...] and produces a vivid, initially inexplicable happiness," but it can also bring "intense, or protracted pain or a helpless, scarcely nameable distress."¹⁷ Perhaps one of the most famous scenes in *À la recherche du temps perdu* recalling events of the past is awakened by the sensation of taste of the French sponge cake, or madeleine:

And soon, [...] I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shudder ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. [...] And suddenly the memory revealed itself. The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine...soaked in her decoction of lime-blossom which my aunt used to give me...¹⁸

Proust believes that the recall of memories "brings things back in an exact dose of memory and forgetting." For him, memory is not what we try to remember by force nor do we know of their existence until they suddenly arrive.¹⁹ The sensations of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell all contribute to awakening memories of the distant past.

Across Dutilleux's major orchestral works following his Piano Sonata, the use of brief motivic ideas—rather than a fully presented theme from the outset—allows thematic materials to grow and be transformed in disguised forms. As a full-fledged compositional approach, it is integrated with contrapuntal techniques, monothematicism, pivot notes, *sons obsessionnels* as well as diverse explorations of articulations, dynamics, timbres and extended techniques.²⁰

17. Wood, 110–111.

18. Marcel Proust, Ingrid Wassenaar, and C. K. Scott-Moncrieff. *Remembrance of Things Past* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2006), 48–51.

19. Wood, 112–113.

20. Humbert, 41; Potter, 96.

In the last movement of the Piano Sonata, variation form is at the height of its realization of Dutilleux's *croissance progressive*. There is a tendency in Dutilleux's later use of thematic growth, however, "not ever to present the theme in its definitive state at the beginning,"²¹ like in his two symphonies, even though the opening chorale theme is presented in its entirety in the second transposition of the octatonic scale²² (Ex. 2.13). Throughout the Sonata, the sonority of the octatonic scale pervades. The ubiquity of tritones in various transpositions and textural appearances resulting from the octatonic scale creates a formidable aural impact on listeners.

CHORAL
Large (♩ = 50)
8-

octatonic scale (transposition 2)

PIANO
ff molto marcato

son obsessionnel (tritone)

Example 2.13 Piano Sonata, Third movement, mm. 1–8

21. Roger Nichols, 89.

22. See Chapter 1, p. 18, footnote number 64 or all three transpositions of the octatonic scale.

In the chorale theme, the tritone appears three times in a row and this interval will be featured quite frequently in subsequent variations.

Table 3 General formal structure of Dutilleux's Piano Sonata, Third movement

Structure	Function in a Sonata	Measure Number		Features
Chorale Theme		1–27		In octatonic scale transposition 2; <i>son obsessionnel</i> on tritone
Variation 1	First movement	28–150	28–57	2-voice fugal writing
			58–77	Implication of <i>croissance progressive</i> with theme broken down to smaller cells
			112–116	Inverted theme
Variation 2	Scherzo movement	151–403	185–201 240–263	Augmented theme in imitation
			270–403	Thematic transformations with changing harmonies, rhythms and textural figurations
Variation 3	Slow movement	404–429		Chorale theme set as a <i>cantus firmus</i> in the middle voice
Variation 4	Finale	430–632		Highly virtuosic
Coda		633–668	633–641	Return of the Chorale theme in octave-doubling

The technique of *croissance progressive* is implied in Variation 1 (Ex. 2.14) through alterations of phrase lengths, repetitions, or re-arrangements of cellular motives. The original chorale theme is broken down into two thematic cells (mm. 58–59 and mm. 60, Ex. 2.15).

VAR. I
Vivace (à 1 temps) (♩ = 100)

staccato, molto ritmico
sf mf
 8ª bassa

Example 2.14 Third movement, Variation 1, mm. 28–33

58 cell A with 2° 3° and tritone cell B

mp molto legato
 8ª bassa

66 cell C

sempre p

72 Cell B in contrary motion

8ª bassa

Example 2.15 Variation 1, mm. 58–75

Based on these two ideas, cell C (mm. 69–71) is formed with an expansion of interval reaching a sixth between the highest and lowest note (B-flat and G, respectively in mm. 69). In addition, there is a shifting of strong beats between the two phrases in measures 69–71 and 72–74;

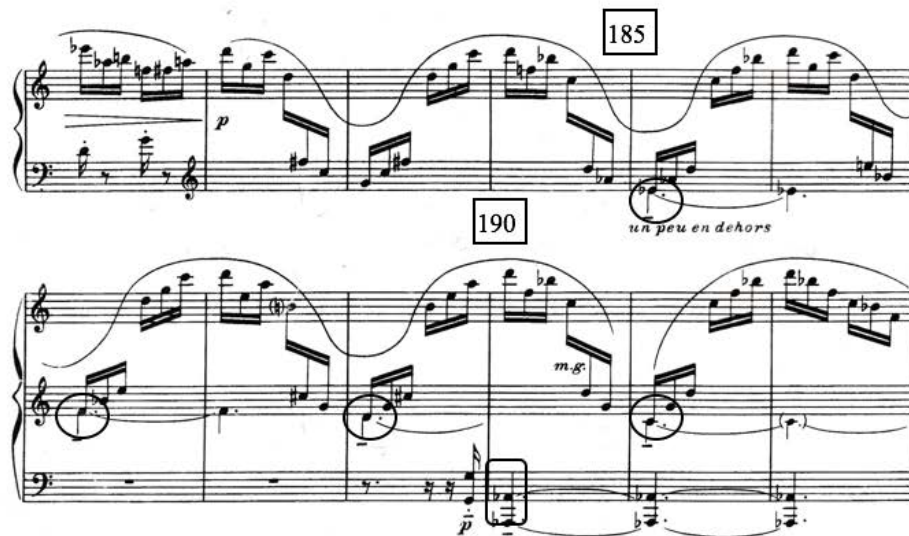
however, the melodic contour is retained from cells A and B and the interval of tritone and thirds are also derived from cell A.



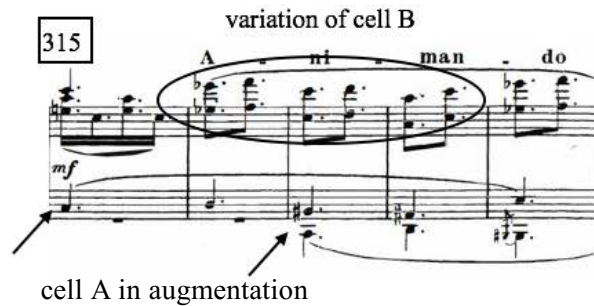
Example 2.16 Third movement, Variation 1, mm. 112–116

In developing thematic cells, Dutilleux utilizes such compositional devices as inversion, imitation, augmentation and diminution. Cell A (Ex. 2.15 mm. 58–59) of the chorale theme has now been inverted (Ex. 2.16). In addition, cell A will be a prominent motivic idea and will reappear throughout the movement with changing harmonies and rhythms as well as various pianistic effects.

In showcasing Joy's light yet brilliant tones complemented with technical prowess and finger dexterity, Dutilleux composed—in the second variation—to her great advantage by writing virtuosic arpeggio-like figurations (Ex. 2.17) with imitations of the chorale theme in augmentation first in the alto (mm. 185–194) and then in the bass (mm. 190–198).



Example 2.17 Third movement, Variation 2, mm. 185–192

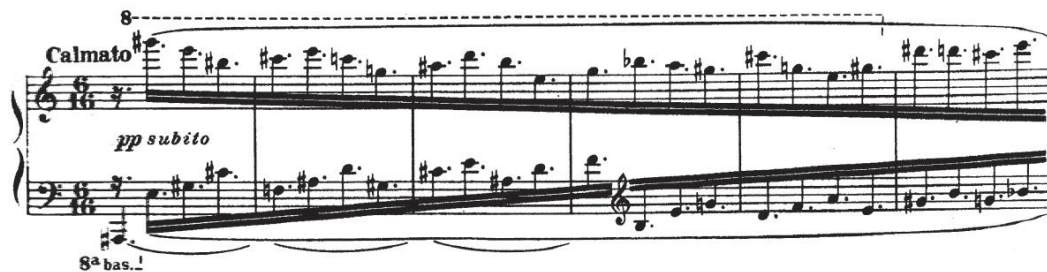


Example 2.18 Third movement, Variation 2, mm. 315–319



Example 2.19 Third movement, Variation 2, mm. 322–326

In Exs. 2.18 and 2.19, repetitions of cell A and B begin building up the resonance with increasing intensity. Following the climax of dense imitational layering and motivic compression, the music comes to a halt—a dramatic silence that suddenly takes listeners to a state of a dream, according to Dutilleux, in which listeners should allow themselves to be carried away, not attempting to control their feelings or analyze the piece.²³



Example 2.20 Third movement, Variation 2, mm. 348–353

This unique way of writing (Ex. 2.20) in which two hands move opposite to each other while maintaining the same intervals is a device invented by Dutilleux: *écriture en éventail* (fan-shaped

23. Potter, 48.

writing). Not only does it catch the ear with its symmetrical mirroring movement but in my opinion, it also fits the hands very well, creating an idiomatic expression for pianists. Moreover, the extreme register coming closer together in critically soft dynamics reduces intensity, making a seamless transition into Variation 3—the only slow section of the movement, which is followed by a brilliant, concluding *Prestissimo* marked by relentless drive, impeccable brilliance and symphonic grandeur.

In the last variation (Ex. 2.21), the toccata-like writing is apparent with broken-chord figurations in the right hand at the marked tempo of *Prestissimo*. Against the rapid movement is the inverted chorale theme in the left hand.



Example 2.21 Third movement, Variation 4, mm. 456–459

423

Example 2.22 Third movement, Variation 3, mm. 423–426

The lucidity of the sonority and a sense of solemn tranquility are achieved by distinct timbres of the treble and bass in extreme registers, and by the treatment of the chorale theme as a *cantus firmus*, later inverted in the middle voice (Ex. 2.22). In echoing the grand opening of the

movement with its three-stave notation that reminds one of Franck's piano writing,²⁴ the chorale theme makes its majestic return one last time in octave-doubling (Ex. 2.23).

633

The musical score for Example 2.23, Third movement, Variation 4, measures 633-641, is presented on three staves. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked 'Poco allarg.' and the dynamics include 'molto f', 'ff', and 'sempre ff'. The score shows a chorale theme in octave-doubling.

Example 2.23 Third movement, Variation 4, mm. 633–641

Paradox of Tradition and Invention

The Piano Sonata exemplifies Dutilleux's compositional language infused with convention and innovation in a myriad of ways. In regards to the phrase structure, its classicism is immediately apparent in the clarity and regularity of phrase lengths that follow the Classical eight-bar phrase or sixteen-bar period. This principle, however, is offset by occasional added beats or abrupt changes of meters, for instance, in the first movement, the sudden shift to meter 7/8 (mm. 16) in the middle of the theme and the passage following it. In the traditional sense, the Sonata also adheres to sonata form with the fast-slow-fast three-movement structure. Within the last movement itself, the four variations “could be viewed as the four sections of a sonata

24. Potter, 54.

(a sonata within a sonata)”²⁵ says Dutilleux. For him, the dual nature is constantly present: the search for freedom of expression outside the “prefabricated formal scaffolding”²⁶ and the conformity to formal procedure in keeping with unity. The persistent ambiguity of tonality resulting from a hybrid use of the octatonic scale and modality seems only to intensify this internal conflict of self-expression and formality. In the first movement, with an attempt to break away from the “scaffolding,” the two supposedly contrasting themes in character and tonal center are presented with more matching qualities than disparities. The monothematic quality of the themes, which leads to the development of *croissance progressive*, can be said to derive from the concept of variation techniques. The briefness and regularity of the two recurring thematic materials share similarity with the “*petite phrase*” (short phrase) in Proust’s fifth volume of *À la recherche du temps perdu* from Vinteuil’s celebrated septet.²⁷ It is perhaps in this regard that the continuous exploration of unifying figures takes centrality in the Sonata and his ensuing compositions.

***Le Jeu des contraires* from 3 Préludes**

The 3 Préludes form a unique set for solo piano not only because—following the Piano Sonata—it is of the most considerable in the scope of Dutilleux’s catalogue for the instrument, but the three pieces were, in fact, written over the span of almost two decades. It consists of *D’ombre et de silence* (From Darkness and Silence, 1973, dedicated to Arthur Rubinstein), *Sur un même accord* (On the Same Chord, 1977, dedicated Claude Helffer) and *Le jeu des contraires* (The Play of Opposites, 1988, revised and published 1994, dedicated to Eugene Istomin). Each explores distinct sound colors and aural effects as well as timbral nuances and shading: from rests (silences); silent playing; gradual releasing of notes from a chord; to mirrored writing and

25. Potter, 53; Glayman, trans. Nichols, 29.

26. Roger Nichols, “Dutilleux at 75,” 701, www.jstor.org/stable/965551.

27. Potter, 60; Joos, 153.

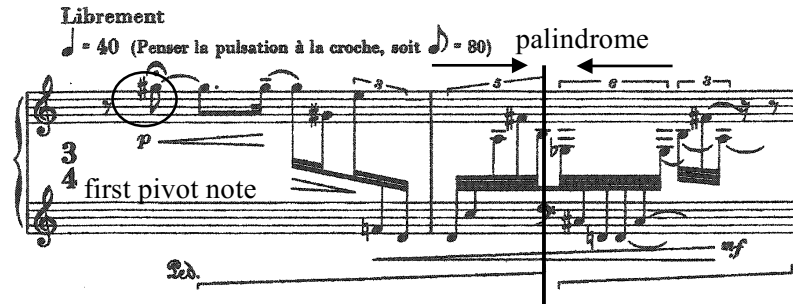
palindromes. The adoption of the genre “prelude” suggests that Dutilleux did not abandon traditional forms even though the harmonic language is significantly atonal—and even serial, at times—in all three of them.

Our discussion with focus on *Le jeu des contraires*, which is the most elaborate and substantial of the three with a mini three-part formal structure similar to that of a sonata (See Table 4). As the title suggests, this is a piece about contrasts on every level: dynamics, rhythm, texture, intervallic progression (both vertical and horizontal symmetry) and above all, sonorities and resonances. In discussing the initial idea of writing a ten-measure piece for the magazine *Le Monde de la Musique*, Dutilleux said that it “contains fan-like writing with intervals that get progressively smaller in a symmetrical fashion; but far fewer of the mirror processes which you find in *Le jeu des contraires* applied to harmonic and at times to rhythmic structures, by analogy with the notion of the palindrome, for example in the simple word ‘LAVAL.’ ”²⁸

Table 4 General Formal Structure of *Le jeu des contraires* from 3 Préludes

Structure	Measure Number		Features
Quasi-Exposition	1–57	1–15	Theme A with pivot note on G-sharp
		16–34	Theme B with pivot note on C-sharp * pivot notes G-sharp and A-sharp (a perfect fourth)
		35–57	Section 2: Horizontal symmetry Pivot note on C-sharp
Development	58–109	58–85 86–92	Pivot note on G: a tritone to C-sharp Homophonic texture in parallel octave
Mini-Recapitulation	110–113		
Coda	114–130		secondary polar notes C and G in bass Baudelairian world of dreams, mystery

28. Glayman, trans. Nichols, 86–87.



Example 2.24 *Le jeu des contraires*, mm. 1–2

The mirrored process is launched promptly in measure 2 and forms the first musical palindrome with F at the center of it (Ex. 2.24). However, this opening idea gets interrupted twice and then the pivot note G-sharp expands to an octave in both hands. A driving impetus briskly propels a chain of symmetrically arranged chords using twelve-tones and progressing in contrary motion with gradual narrowing of intervals from an octave until they settle tentatively on thirds (Ex. 2.25). There are numerous other passages in which Dutilleux applies the twelve-tone method.”²⁹

Example 2.25 *Le jeu des contraires*, mm. 7–10

29. Nichols, “Dutilleux at 75,” 701; Didier Rotella, « Des Figures de résonances aux Trois Préludes: quelques aspects de l’écriture pianistique d’Henri Dutilleux », in *Henri Dutilleux: Entre le cristal et la nuée*, ed. Nicolas Darbon (Paris: Centre de documentation de la musique contemporaine, 2010), 109.

In measures 35–38 (Ex. 2.26), for example, the twelve-tone method is utilized first in presenting the linear motivic idea reciprocated between the left and right hand and then later synthesized vertically as chords (mm. 39–45) to establish grounds for harmonic structure and intensity. In this regard, Dutilleux succeeds in distinguishing himself from serial composers by skillfully incorporating the technique to his advantage. By freely adopting the serial approach with a full awareness of tonal hierarchy, Dutilleux’s use of pivot notes and meticulous intervallic schemes as well as fan-like writing are critical and individualistic features in this prelude.

35

Toujours animé

Example 2.26 *Le jeu des contraires*, mm. 35–36

The second section of this quasi-exposition is characterized by fan-like writing (mm. 35–38), as in the last movement of the Piano Sonata (Ex. 2.20), with semi-circular gestures in contrary motion mirroring each hand. The interval of a fourth now functions as *son obsessionnel* in the prelude, as both perfect fourth and tritone (Ex. 2.27, mm. 29). The pivot note shifts from the opening G-sharp to C-sharp, forming a tonal relationship also of a fourth in the secondary area (Ex. 2.27, mm. 16).

16

tritone symmetry within a chord

29

major seventh chords with a tritone

Example 2.27 *Le jeu des contraires*, mm. 16, 29

46

Example 2.28 *Le jeu des contraires*, mm. 46–47

C-sharp dominates this whole section beginning with harmonics achieved by pressing down the keys silently in clusters (Ex. 2.28) until the mirroring clashes find resolution through repetition and finally reach unison in the low register (Ex. 2.7). Even though Dutilleux had used the same note to conclude a section in the first movement of his Piano Sonata (see Chapter 1, Ex. 2.6), the rests in between each recurrence of the harmonics with the increasingly more frequent decrescendo that brings the section to a suspended closure on a fermata achieve a powerful sense of dramatic silence (*silence dramatique*)³⁰ unlike that of the sonata.

30. Joos, 132; another example can be found in the ending of Liszt's Piano Sonata in B Minor.

In contrast to the intricate mirroring process in the development (Ex. 2.29), it is notable that the entirely homophonic texture in parallel octaves (Ex. 2.30) appears in the middle of a prelude about contrasts—perhaps a contrast to contrast!

58 Volubile ♩ = 126

third pivot note
tritone to the second pivot note C-sharp

pp
Ped. sourde seulement

Example 2.29 *Le jeu des contraires*, mm. 58–59

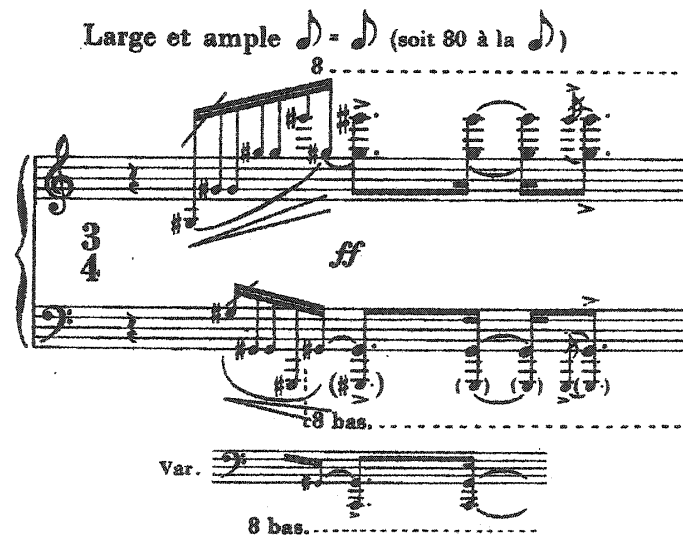
86

pp subito
Ped. sourde seulement

Example 2.30 *Le jeu des contraires*, mm. 86–87

The compact return of the opening theme (Ex. 2.31) gives significance to the concept of Proustian time critical to Dutilleux's works in connection with music and memory. With a long interval elapse between the first appearance of the theme and its recapitulation here, Dutilleux attempts to retrieve the involuntary memory of the past—of what is unforgotten—through musical means. This musical delineation finds its parallel in *À la recherche du temps perdu* in the episode situated in the hotel of Guermantes, where the treading of the uneven paving stone reminds the Narrator of his visit to St. Mark's Square in Venice. It is the physical action that triggers off reminiscences of Venice far more effectively than the conscious attempts to

remember his visit.³¹ By the same token, the gesture of the return of this thematic material brings brilliance and exuberance in re-finding its musical personality—a Romantic concept adhered by Chopin in distinction to the resolution-seeking approach to the recapitulation of the Classical period.³²



Example 2.31 *Le jeu des contraires*, mm. 110

In a later revision of *Le jeu des contraires*, Dutilleux added an extended coda. The addition seems to make a fitting and symbolic reference to the Baudelairian world of dreams, supernatural universe and spirituality. The recurring bass chord evokes mystery while the distant chord in the top voice comes as if from a distant world.

The influence of Webern is clearly suggested with the use of sparse notes and transparent texture interspersed with rests in the Coda (Ex. 2.32), which renders it a crystal-clear and refined sonority. In homage to his French predecessor, Debussy, Dutilleux makes a musical reference to the former's Prelude, *La Danse de Puck* (Ex. 2.33) with a fleeting brush of arabesques, leaving a tone of interrogative silence and contemplation (Ex. 2.34).

31. Potter, 61; Joos, 152.

32. Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 335.

Lent et mystérieux ♩ = 72 maximum
 (Penser la pulsation à la croche) 8 (lointain)

8 bas... les 2 2ed. 8 bas...

Exemple 2.32 *Le jeu des contraires*, mm. 114–115

95 Rapide et fuyant

pp 8 1' 1'

Exemple 2.33 Debussy, *La Danse de Puck* from *Préludes*, Book 1, mm. 95–96

130

loco 8 8 8 fff

Exemple 2.34 *Le jeu des contraires*, mm. 130

Conclusion

As a composer living through the modern time, Dutilleux—being fully aware of the most current musical trends—selected a unique path for himself. Greatly influenced by his French predecessors, Fauré and Debussy, in particular, Dutilleux retained a high sense of harmonic integrity in his compositions. Without it, Dutilleux stated, a piece of music would lose its entire vertical structure. Whether it be serial technique, polyphonic writing, modality or polytonality (essentially a variation of the octatonic scale), he applied them as appropriate in keeping with the harmonic integrity and, above all, the structural delineation of the music. In addition, his fondness of timbral variety is well demonstrated through registral arrangement and fluid pianistic figurations in the Piano Sonata and *Le jeu des contraires*. In casting his works in traditional forms and genres, such as sonatas, symphonies, concerti and preludes, Dutilleux had a structural framework that allowed him to freely pursue personal expression. Using obsessional sonorities juxtaposed with contemplative and oniric imagination, Dutilleux invites us to plunge into a psychological venture of temporal evolution and perpetual thematic mutations.

If Dutilleux's lifelong fascination with the literature of Marcel Proust and Charles Baudelaire was cultivated in his adulthood, his great interest in the visual arts had begun since his childhood. His meticulous and almost calligraphic hand-writing in composing attests to his belief that "a composer is first and foremost a calligrapher." Impressed by Debussy's hand-writing, described as "beautiful in its intricacy...stunning and of great cosmetic beauty,"¹ Dutilleux's affinity for the visual prompted musical palindromes, symmetry and mirroring process in both the Piano Sonata and *Le jeu des contraires* combined with contrapuntal complexity. It is with all these above-mentioned features that form his literarily-influenced stylistic approach in

1. Potter, 123.

modernized harmonic language within renewed forms—a distinct compositional style of his own merged with convention and innovation.

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